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Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Russian Federation casts veto in Security Council to reject proposal to treat costs of United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus as expenses of Organization to be borne by Member States, with effect from 15 June, 1993.

+ At second meeting this evening, Council calls on Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reconsider its announcement to withdraw from Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

+ Secretary-General doubts validity of Bosnian Serbs referendum on Vance/Owen peace plan as United Nations does not recognize legitimacy of Bosnian Serb Republic or its Assembly.

+ Time to "change priorities" of UNPROFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina has passed, says Thorvald Stoltenberg, new Co-Chairman of Yugoslav Conference; United Nations Bosnian Ambassador suggests withdrawal of UNPROFOR for safety reasons and to allow for military action.

+ United States wants to rejoin United Nations Population Fund as leading contributor; is "deeply disturbed" however by coercive population programmes in China, Preparatory Committee for International Conference on Population and Development is told.

+ Wide range of human rights principles contained in draft final document to be considered at 1993 Human Rights Conference in Vienna this June; text adopted after three weeks of negotiations by Preparatory Committee in Geneva.

+ More than 1,000 polling officers to attend training session in Thailand for May 23 Cambodian elections; UNTAC reports widespread political violence in Cambodia in April.

+ UNHCR Sadako Ogata to sign agreement with Government of Bangladesh on repatriation of Myanmar refugees; potential refugees to be interviewed to ensure that repatriation is voluntary.

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+ Chief of United Nations Environment Programme says Agency should streamline activities, devoting resources to priority projects.

+ Special Committee on Israeli Practices is told of harsh measures used by Israeli authorities to repress opposition in occupied territories, during field mission to Damascus, Amman and Cairo.

+ Regional and global disarmament recommended as Disarmament Commission ends 1993 session.

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The Russian Federation today rejected a draft resolution under which the Security Council would have decided to treat the costs of United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) as expenses of the Organization to be borne by Member States, with effect from the next extension of the Force's mandate on or before 15 June, 1993. It did so by exercising its right, as a Permanent Member of the Council, to veto the text sponsored by the United Kingdom.

Under the draft, the Council would have decided that UNFICYP should be restructured as a first step on the basis of the Secretary-General's recommendations in his latest report on the question. The Council would also have decided to conduct a comprehensive reassessment of UNFICYP, its effect on confidence-building measures and a political settlement, additional to the regular six monthly consideration of the Force's mandate.

After the vote, the Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Yuliy Vorontsov, explained that his country had voted against the text because Russia did not consider it timely to extend mandatory financing to UNFICYP which up to now had been entirely paid for on a voluntary basis. Voluntary financing for peace-keeping operations should not be rejected all together as an option, Mr. Vorontsov said. Russia had already been forced to agree with the shift to mandatory contributions of United Nations Member States for the operations in Somalia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Had the decision been adopted today, no peace-keeping operations would have been left paid for on a voluntary basis, the Russian Representative noted.

Other delegations deplored the Russian veto and stressed it created a dangereous precedent in the future.

The veto was last cast on 31 May, 1990, when the United States used its right under the United Nations Charter to reject a draft resolution which would have established a commission to examine the situation in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel.

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At a second meeting this evening, the Security Council called upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to reconsider its announcement in March to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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(NPT) and to honour its obligations under that Treaty. It also called on the country to comply with its safeguard agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as specified by the resolution of the IAEA Board of Governors of 25 February.

The Council took that action by adopting resolution 826 (1993) by a vote of 13 in favour with two abstentions (China and Pakistan). It asked the Director-General of IAEA to continue to consult with the DPRK "with a view to resolving the issues which are the subject of the Board of Governors' findings". The Council urged all Member States to encourage the DPRK to respond positively to this resolution in order to facilitate a solution.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea announced on 12 March that it would withdraw "unavoidably" from the NPT, after IAEA asked the country to provide additional information concerning its nuclear programme and allow the international inspection of two military sites. The DPRK authorities argued that their decision to withdraw from the NPT was adopted as a measure to defend its "supreme" interest.

On 1 April, the IAEA Board of Governors reiterated in a resolution that the DPRK was in non-compliance with its obligations under the nuclear agreement, and that the IAEA had not been able to verify that there had been no diversion of nuclear materials required to be safeguarded under the agreement.

Before the vote, the Permanent Representative of the DPRK stressed that, as a sovereign State party to the Treaty, his country had the right to withdraw from the NPT. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea (ROK) stated that such a decision would be counter-productive to the continuation of a peaceful dialogue between the two Koreas.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed doubt at the validity of the Bosnian Serbs referendum on the Vance/Owen peace plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina, given the war conditions and all the "ethnic cleansing" that has taken place, a United Nations spokesman said today. He noted that the United Nations did not recognize the legitimacy of the Bosnian Serb Republic or its Assembly in Pale, which had rejected the plan last week.

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The time to "change the priorities" of the United Nations Protection Force in former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) had passed, Thorvald Stoltenberg, new Co-Chairman of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, told a press conference in Geneva today. He made the statement in reply to a question about "the fact that the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina has called for the departure of UNPROFOR".

Mr. Stoltenberg, who succeeds Cyrus Vance, went on to say that he supported the Vance/Owen plan and hoped to achieve quick results. However, he

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said, he saw immense historic, ethnic and political problems involved in the conflict. An example of that was the recent flairing up of the conflict between the Bosnians and the Croats.

Mohamed Sacirbey, the Bosnian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, told correspondents this afternoon before Council's consultations on the subject that his Foreign Minister had urged the United Nations to withdraw UNPROFOR from his country, if its mandate could not be modified. He said that such action would improve the security of United Nations peace-keepers and allow for military action against the Bosnian Serbs.

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The United States wants to rejoin the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as a leading contributor, Timothy Ward, the country's representative to the Preparatory Committee for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development said today. The United States was in the final stage of deliberations on the conditions and level of funding, he added. However, it was deeply disturbed by, and would not contribute to, coercive population programmes in China.

The 1994 Conference should produce a broad international commitment to population stabilization and to the right of women to family planning, Mr. Ward said. The United States would also like to see a real commitment to sustainable development and to the goals of Agenda 21, the programme of action from last year's United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

During its two-week session, the Preparatory Committee is expected to agree on the final document to be adopted by the Conference, which will take place in Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994. The aim of the Conference is to widen freedom of choice in such matters as family size, population policy and development practices. The overall theme, as defined by the Economic and Social Council, is population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

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The concept that democracy, development and respect for human rights are "interdependent and mutually reinforcing" is among the wide range of human rights principles contained in the draft final document which will be considered at the 1993 Human Rights Conference in Vienna this June. The draft was adopted in Geneva on Saturday, 8 May, after three weeks of negotiations by delegates in the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference on Human Rights.

The document states among other things that "it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms". It also reaffirms the rights of minorities and says that persons belonging to minorities have the "right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion and to use their own language in private and in public".

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The document also contains a draft programme of action in the years ahead which, among other things, urges Goverments and the United Nations to give priority to the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights.

The draft final document is closely based on regional declarations adopted earlier this year by preparatory meetings held in Tunis, San José and Bangkok, as well as contributions made by Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

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More than 1,000 polling officers from over 50 countries will gather in Thailand on 13 May to attend a 3-day training session for the forthcoming Cambodian elections, a United Nations spokesman said today. The officers will travel to Cambodia between 16 and 18 May to prepare for the 23 May elections.

In a related development, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) said there had been widespread political violence in the country last month. UNTAC received reports of 44 attacks by the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea, which had resulted in 62 deaths, 137 injuries and 31 abductions. Attacks by unidentified groups had resulted in a further 20 deaths.

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata will sign a memorandum of understanding regarding the repatriation of refugees from Myanmar during a visit to Bangladesh from May 12 to 15, according to a UNHCR statement. Under the agreement with the Government of Bangladesh, the UNHCR will have a presence in camps housing 230,000 refugees, and will interview all potential returnees to ensure that repatriation is voluntary.

Mrs. Ogata will tour refugee camps and meet with Government officials in Dacca, the release said. The UNHCR is assisting Myanmar refugees in 20 camps under its care and maintenance programme, at a projected cost of $15 million in 1993.

More than 250,000 Muslim refugees from Myanmar fled to Bangladesh in early 1992, 22,500 of whom have returned. The UNHCR became involved in the repatriation process early this year after gaining access to potential refugees. The agency does not have a presence in Myanmar.

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The Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has begun its seventeenth session at its headquarters in Nairobi. The session -- the first since last year's United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) -- will last until 21 May.

UNEP's new Executive Director Elizabeth Dowdeswell asked delegates to keep UNCED in their thoughts during the session, and said the Council could

put some of the Conference's plans, programmes and policies into action. She called on delegates to set clear priorities, to drop programmes that could not be implemented with the agreed funding, and to streamline the distribution of available resources.

Ms. Dowdeswell will make a major policy statement to the Council next Monday, when Government ministers from more than 40 countries are expected to attend. The Council meets every two years to address environmental policy issues, to review UNEP's performance, and to agree on a budget for the next biennium.

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The Israeli authorities were using harsh measures to repress opposition in the occupied territories, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs has been told during its two-week field mission to Damascus, Amman and Cairo.

There had been many civilian deaths, new methods of house demolition had been introduced and the climate of violence had been exacerbated by the deployment of special "undercover units", it was told. The Special Committee has consistently been denied access to the territories occupied by Israel and therefore relies on reports from the Israeli press, other media, including the Arab language press published in the occupied territories, as well as on evidence provided by persons with first-hand knowledge of the situation in the territories.

The Special Committee ended its mission on 8 May.

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The Disarmament Commission, ending its 1993 session today at Headquarters, has called for regional and global approaches to disarmament and recommended that the General Assembly adopt guidelines on such measures. The Commission also recommended that regional arrangements give priority to the elimination of destabilizing military capabilities, emphasizing that they must conform to the United Nations Charter and international law.

During the session, which began on 19 April, the Commission discussed nuclear disarmament in the context of international peace and security, regional approaches to disarmament, and the role of science and technology in international security and disarmament. However, agreement could not be reached on certain aspects of the role of science and technology for disarmament.

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